

May 1, 2006

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

Polish engineers train for mission

Page 8



A C-130 Hercules makes its final approach to land on an operational part of the runway at Kandahar Airfield. The flight path is across and directly in line with the runway's new concrete touch down, an Afghanistan Engineer District project currently under construction.

Photo by Dennis Campbell
Afghanistan Engineer District

Cover: Polish Plutonowy Krzysztof Maziarz dons explosive ordnance disposal overalls during demining training April 18. The overalls are used by Polish sappers when disarming explosives and mines. Maziarz is assigned to the Polish contingent at Bagram Airfield.

Photo by Army Spc. James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment

Contents

Page 3: Governors visit troops in Afghanistan

Page 4: Spartan commander meets with Nangarhar governor

Page 6: New school opens in Paktika Province

Page 7: Coalition forces confiscate weapons

Page 8: Polish engineers train for mission ▶

Page 10: Communications team keeps unit connected

Page 12: Air Force C-130s support Coalition operations

Page 14: Around the Services

Page 15: Community showcases talents in Kandahar ▶



Afghanistan Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

Freedom Watch is a weekly publication of
Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry
Public Affairs Officer Col. Tom Collins

Freedom Watch, an Army publication, is published each Monday by the 19th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 5,000 copies per week.

In accordance with AR-360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 19th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 415, Room 205, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

Freedom Watch Staff

Commander - Capt. Jim Bono
NCOIC - Sgt. 1st Class Ken McCooey
Editor - Cpl. Tremeshia Ellis
Journalists - Spc. James Tamez
Pfc. Anna Perry
Pfc. Michael Nyeste

**Visit the CFC-A Web site at
www.cfc-a.centcom.mil**

Click on the *Freedom Watch* link in the features section to view the *Freedom Watch*. To be added to the weekly distribution list, e-mail freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil

U.S. governors visit troops in Afghanistan

By Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- U.S. governors from Florida, Iowa, Indiana and West Virginia visited troops here April 17.

Govs. Jeb Bush of Florida, Thomas Vilsack of Iowa, Mitch Daniels of Indiana and Joe Manchin of West Virginia came to

Afghanistan to see the progress being made here and to visit with their constituents, Bush said.

They heard about progress in Afghanistan during a meeting with 14 Afghan province governors. They also met and talked with Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

"The commitment, dedication and the

desire they have for freedom speaks volumes," Manchin said of the Afghan leadership. "I think they are going to be very successful in Afghanistan."

The governors said they were not only impressed with Afghan leaders, they also were impressed with the tireless efforts of the troops.

"I am enormously proud of all of our troops," Daniels said. "They're doing an outstanding job. Now I can go back and report that firsthand."

The job troops do on a daily basis has yielded great results for Afghanistan and the world as a whole, Bush said.

"The Afghan people want us here, and I think that's encouraging," Bush said. "The efforts to provide security for Afghanistan and to root out the terrorists are, in my opinion, a great success. If you consider where Afghanistan is today and where it was four years ago, it's day and night."

The troops were glad to see their governors supporting them firsthand while they're deployed, said Army Sgt. Monica Johnson, an administration assistant with the 10th Joint Logistics Command.

"I think it was great. I think they just enjoyed the opportunity to thank us for our hard work," Johnson said.

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael Nyeste



Govs. Mitch Daniels, Indiana; Thomas Vilsack, Iowa; Jeb Bush, Florida; and Joe Manchin, West Virginia, pose with their security team and State Department workers at the Bagram clam shell.

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Who is the elder?

Dari

Kai Bozarg ast? (Kai-Bo-zorg-ast?)

Pashtu

Sook masher dae? (Sok-ma-shar-dae?)

Afghan cultural tidbit

Afghan men traditionally wear turbans. Cloth, traditionally white but now of any color, is wound around locally favored types of turban caps. Pashtuns, and others who dress like them, leave a couple of feet of turban cloth hanging down. Most men in the rest of the country tuck the end in.

Courtesy Photo

Task Force 27 'Tigers' roar into Afghanistan

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Army Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara, 27th Engineering (Combat Airborne) Battalion, Task Force 27, assumed command from Army Lt. Col. Alberto Rosende, 391st Engineer Battalion, Task Force Wildcat, during a transfer-of-authority ceremony April 17 on Bagram Airfield.

"The ceremony today is meant to do two things: first, acknowledge the contributions of Task Force Wildcat over the last year, and second, announce there is another big cat on the prowl in Afghanistan -- the Tigers of Task Force 27," O'Hara said.

The many accomplishments of O'Hara's predecessors were highlighted throughout the ceremony.

The mission of the Wildcats was combat engineer operations; including route clearance, road construction, assured mobility, and area and point demining.

"The mission being transferred today between the Wildcats and the Tigers is probably one the most complex, dangerous and important missions any combat engineer battalion in the United States Army is performing anywhere in the global war on terror," said Army Col. Michael Flanagan, TF 27 commander.

During his address, Rosende touched upon the pride he felt after completing such an important mission.



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Army Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Stacey Ulep unfurl their unit's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony held April 17 on Bagram Airfield. O'Hara and Ulep are assigned to the 27th Engineer Battalion, an active duty unit from Fort Bragg, N.C.

"My chest swells at the thought of the tenacity and guts with which our teams pursued their missions, such as how the route clearance (teams) pursued the hunt and destruction of (improvised explosive devices)," he said.

The colonel said he feels his unit epitomized the motto, 'Impossible means it is just harder.'

Although O'Hara assumed command April 17, his Soldiers have already been contributing to the fight.

"Today, as we conduct this ceremony,

your troops are already in the thick of the action ... take the work already done by the Wildcats and push the ball forward as you already are," Flanagan told O'Hara.

In an address to O'Hara's troops, Flanagan wished them the best for the remainder of their deployment.

"You represent the best (combat engineers) in the world. ... Much will be asked of you in the year to come, but I know you will take the fight to the enemy all the while making Afghanistan a safer place for the Afghan people," he said.

Spartan commander meets with Nangarhar governor

By Army Sgt. 1st Class
Michael Pintagro
Task Force Spartan Public Affairs

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Task Force Spartan Commander, Army Col. John Nicholson, met with Nangarhar Province Gov. Gul Agha Sherzai, at the governor's residence in Jalalabad, the province's capital April 23 to discuss Coalition activities in northeastern Afghanistan.

Their discussions focused on topics ranging from border security and poppy eradication to regional recon-



Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Pintagro

Army Col. John Nicholson and Gov. Gul Agha Sherzai discuss allied operations April 23 at the governor's residence in Jalalabad. Nicholson is the Task Force Spartan commander, and Sherzai is the Nangarhar Province governor.

See TALKS Page 7

ANA tactical training house provides advanced skills

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan -- The Afghan National Police took a successful leap toward advance training with the opening of the Brummet Tactical Training House at the Central Training Center on April 18.

During a ribbon cutting ceremony, ANP Brig. Gen. Khadadad Aga, the center's commander, inaugurated the new facility, which will be used to teach ANP cadets to clear rooms.

"As with the rest of our curriculum, this training is educational and highly effective for the future of ANP officers," Aga said. "The implementation of the tactical training is useful and very practical."

The house allows ANP cadets to train to respond to domestic violence, apprehended insurgents or handle a hostage.

The facilities allow instructors to simulate different scenarios that may occur during an ANP duty day. The tactical house will be integrated into ANP basic training.

To further hone the skills of ANP cadets, the emphasis of training is maintaining situational awareness and survival in high-risk environments.

Once trained, ANP officers will be able to respond to dangerous situations decisively but with a reduced chance of injury to innocent bystanders.

"Surely this will benefit the cadets," said Capt. Hamed Sayed-Aga, an ANP instructor. "We give them lectures in the classroom, but this house will allow us to demonstrate the effective and practical lessons with hands-on training."

The facility is the first of its kind to be opened in the region, and plans have been made to build six more houses throughout regional training centers in Afghanistan.

Afghan National Police tactical trainers demonstrate techniques that will be passed on to future generations of ANP cadets at the Brummet Tactical Training House.



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Will Townsend

Enduring Voices

What piece of Afghanistan do you want to take home with you?



Army Chief Warrant Officer David Clark

Salerno

"I would take home a teapot. They are very interesting. It's something the local people carry around all the time."



Army Capt. Dan Lister

Salerno

"It would be a Marco-Polo goat because they are unique to the region."



Army Spc. Omika Vickers

Salerno

"I would take home a child to show them the American experience and a better life, a different life."



Army 1st Sgt. Barry Frandsen

Salerno

"I would take home some of the rocks and minerals. They remind me a lot of Idaho."

Task Force assumes engineer operation

By Army Pfc.

Anna K. Perry

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Army Col. Michael Flanagan, commander of Combined Task Force Sword, 18th Engineer Brigade, passed the torch to Army Lt. Col. Les Swartz, Combined Task Force Chamberlain, 240th Engineer Group, in a transfer-of-authority ceremony here April 18.

"Combined Task Force Sword is no more. ... The Soldiers before you are now Combined Task Force Chamberlain, the mantle of responsibility for engineer operations in support of Combined Joint Task Force - 76," Flanagan said. "I am confident the engineers assigned to this task force will continue providing world-class sapper support to the operation of CJTF-76."

Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, commander of



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

Army Lt. Col. Les Swartz and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Luce unfurl their unit's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony held April 18 on Bagram Airfield. Swartz and Luce are assigned to the 240th Engineer Group.

the Coalition's CJTF-76, reflected upon the accomplishments of the Task Force Sword Soldiers.

"Your deployment has made significant accomplishments to the nation of Afghanistan," Freakley said.

Task Force Sword completed about 170 miles of road construction, cleared more than 70 improvised explosive devices and rendered safe nearly 35,000

pounds of scrap metal, mines and other unexploded ordnance from a war-torn nation ravaged by more than 30 years of combat.

The Soldiers assigned to Task Force Sword earned many awards for their dedicated service in Afghanistan.

To date, Task Force Sword Soldiers have received 240 Bronze Stars, 16 Army Commendation Medals with valor devices, 1,002 Army

Commendation Medals, 35 Army Achievement Medals and 167 Combat Action Badges.

Swartz said he is proud to follow in Flanagan's exemplary footsteps.

"Task Force Sword truly set the standard and the stage for our success," he said. "I am humbled to follow the path of Colonel Flanagan and the great Soldiers of his task force."

New school opens in Paktika Province



Photo by Army Sgt. Tim Sander

Army Capt. Scott Horrigan hands out school supplies to the children of Charbaran at the recent school opening. Soldiers, Afghan officials and Afghan school children celebrated the opening of a new school at a ribbon-cutting ceremony held in Paktika Province on April 23.

By Army Sgt. Tim Sander

345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan – Soldiers, Afghan officials and Afghan school children celebrated the opening of a new school at a ribbon-cutting ceremony held in Paktika Province on April 23.

The eight-room school, designed to support 150 to 250 students of all ages, is staffed by teachers selected by the government of Afghanistan, said Army Lt. Col. Chris Toner, Task Force Catamount commander.

TF Catamount, comprised of the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment from Fort Drum, N.Y., as well as Airmen and

See SCHOOL Page 7

Coalition forces confiscate weapons

Afghans report hidden munitions, take active role in fighting enemy

**Combined Forces Command -
Afghanistan Public Affairs**

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Coalition forces confiscated two weapon caches in the Pech District of Kunar Province on April 23 while conducting combat patrols supporting Operation Mountain Lion.

An Afghan reported the first cache to Coalition forces. When the patrol arrived, two elders led them to a house where the munitions were hidden in a crawl space.

The cache consisted of 49 rocket-propelled grenades, 17 RPG boosters,

three 60 mm mortar rounds, three grenades, five rockets and miscellaneous ammunition, including shotgun shells.

A Coalition patrol found the second cache in a tree. The find yielded an assault rifle with magazine, another rifle and three 30-round magazines containing ammunition.

Afghan and Coalition forces secured the sites, and an explosive ordnance disposal team recovered the munitions.

"Recovering and disposing of these weapons increases the safety and security of Afghans and reduces the dan-

gers posed by insurgents who use them to indiscriminately inflict harm to Afghan people, Afghan National Security Forces and Coalition forces," said Army Lt. Col Paul Fitzpatrick, Combined Joint Task Force -76 spokesman.

"Citizens who report the location of caches earn the gratitude of the Afghan people," Fitzpatrick said.

"A collective effort of individual good deeds will unite the country of Afghanistan as a self-determined, self-secured and self-led nation," Fitzpatrick added.

TALKS, from Page 4

struction and economic transformation.

Sherzai also briefed the colonel April 22 at a meeting with civic leaders and mullahs. The leaders, the governor observed, shared the allies' commitment to ridding the northeast of terror.

"This will represent a new vision for the people of Nangarhar and Afghanistan," he said.

The leaders pledged to wage a vigorous fight against terrorists operating in the northeast,

while Sherzai congratulated the commander on the success of Operation Mountain Lion. Nicholson and Sherzai also noted the importance of non-kinetic aspects of the fight against terrorism.

"We'll defeat the terrorists militarily, but this is only one part of the solution for Afghanistan," Nicholson said. "First, we defeat the enemy. This will help us separate the enemy from the people. Then, we help the people economically and transform the environment to encourage the

long-term prosperity and security of the Afghan people."

"We have two means of fighting — by guns and violence and by talking," Sherzai added. "We prefer to accomplish everything by talking."

The governor discussed potentially beneficial infrastructure changes such as improvements to Jalalabad Airfield. He also called for a greater government role in primary and secondary education.

The task force commander said there's a correlation between kinetic and nonkinetic

aspects of the mission.

"If we provide security, we can work toward the economic developments the governor discussed," he said.

The meeting concluded with a luncheon, a visit from two of Sherzai's children and a grandson, a tour of the governor's residence and the presentation of a carpet to the colonel. Sherzai thanked Nicholson for the support of the American people.

"We thank the Afghan people for allowing us to come here," the commander said.

SCHOOL from Page 6

Sailors, participated in the event.

"As a teacher, I am honored to be here today to open a school," said Army Lt. Col. Janet Loefstedt, Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, to the local leaders. "I saw your children lining the road as I came into Charbaran and thought this school would get much use."

The villagers of Charbaran listened attentively to the colonel's words as they were translated to them.

"It also made me think we have a great deal of unfinished work (because) we do not need just primary schools, but secondary schools, and clearly, we do not need just one school, but many schools," Loefstedt said. "I tell you this: Every word

your children learn to read, every number they learn to add, every bit of knowledge they gain from this school is progress."

To close her speech, Loefstedt placed her hand over her heart, a local gesture of friendship, and spoke in the language of the villagers surrounding her. "Manana," she said, which means 'thank you' in Pashtu.

Following the speeches and celebratory song and dance, the crowd of Soldiers, elders and children strolled through the peaceful village toward the new school building.

The governor of Paktika Province, Dr. Akram Khpalwak, stood at the entrance of the red brick building holding a pair of scissors in his hand. After a quick "snip,"

the school was officially open for learning and a swarm of anxious children surged through the single hall for the first time to inspect their new classrooms.

The Catamount Soldiers handed out notepads, pens and backpacks before beginning the three-hour return journey through the rugged mountain pass back to Forward Operating Base Orgun-E.

"It is my job to support your governor ... to enact a vision of reconstruction (in Paktika Province)," Loefstedt said. "I want to assure you that I will continue to work with your governor and your government to be the best possible provincial reconstruction team for Paktika Province, and I look forward to many more visits to Charbaran."



Mine-clearing signs, like this one posted near the south gate at Bagram Airfield, serve as reminders of the dangerous job sappers, like those of the Polish Army's 2nd Engineering Brigade, are expected to perform on a daily basis.

Polish engineers train for mission

By Army Spc. James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- In an effort to hone the skills that keep military people and civilians around Bagram safe, the Polish engineering contingent participated in demining training here April 18.

"We have to make sure our soldiers are well trained to avoid accidents," said Polish army Maj. Maciej Grajper, 2nd Engineering Brigade, the unit in charge of demining operations in and around the airfield. "Mines at Bagram are everywhere - there is much work to do."

Officials estimate there are between 7 million to 10 million mines throughout Afghanistan. Grajper said demining Afghanistan is a daunting job, and it has to be taken 1 centimeter at a time to be done right.

The major said it was necessary for his unit, which was in place April 10, to under-



go this type of training before beginning demining missions.

The training also helped the Poles become better accustomed to the climate of Afghanistan, which is quite different than Poland. He said in Poland, where his unit originally trained, the climate and ground is wetter than in Afghanistan.

The weather may be different, but the purpose of the job is still the same.

"We hope to gain great experience here," said Polish army Kamil Mosinski, platoon commander, 2nd Engineering Brigade.

Mosinski said the desire to make the

training as realistic as possible led to extensive planning and preparation before their arrival here.

"This training area was prepared two months ago by American engineers, so the mines are well hidden," Mosinski said.

He said because the training mines had been in the ground for such an extended period of time, the area appeared undisturbed.

Grajper said he hoped his unit's efforts, as well as the efforts of other combat engineers, will eventually leave Afghanistan free of mines and mine-related injuries.

"We help people because mines are a threat to everyone," he said. "Children sometimes think mines look like toys because of their many shapes and sizes."

"It is most important for me to find a mine, destroy it and make sure nobody is hurt," said Polish army Sgt. Biere Wojciech, 2nd section commander, 2nd Engineering Brigade. "It is very important for civilians and Coalition forces."



(Above) Polish Plutonowy Robert Filipeli uses a metal detector to search for mines during demining training at Bagram Airfield on April 18. Filipeli is a sapper assigned to the 2nd Engineering Brigade, Polish contingent.

(Right) Polish Plutonowy Sebastien Bartkowski demonstrates the effectiveness of insulated cushions footwear during demining training April 18. Bartkowski stepped on a pack of cigarettes without damaging either the pack or the cigarettes within. Bartkowski is a sapper assigned to the Polish contingent at Bagram Airfield.

(Left) Polish Plutonowy Krzysztof Maziarz attaches his helmet to his EOD overalls.



Polish Plutonowy Mirosław Gierasimiuk uses his knife to check for a mine during demining training at Bagram Airfield on April 18. Gierasimiuk is a sapper assigned to the 2nd Engineering Brigade, Polish contingent.



Communications team keeps unit connected

By Army Pfc.
Michael Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team's mission is to enhance infrastructure here by planning and overseeing construction projects.

The civil affairs team couldn't accomplish this mission if it wasn't for two service members who keep it connected with the outside world.

Army Spc. Steven Nations, an information management officer, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Joseph Joson, the non-commissioned officer in charge of communications, are the first to arrive and last to leave work every day to conduct maintenance on the Panjshir PRT's communication equipment, Nations said.

Maintaining the equipment keeps the small, but self-sufficient, unit connected with the rest of Afghanistan, Joson said.

"If we were to have a serious medical emergency that our medical resources couldn't handle, our communications



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

Air Force Staff Sgt. Joseph Joson, left, and Army Spc. Steven Nations work together on a satellite dish to re-establish an Internet connection. Joson is the noncommissioned officer in charge of communications, and Nations is an information management officer for Panjshir PRT.

equipment has to be functioning in order to contact Bagram and have them treat the emergency," Joson said.

Nations and Joson do more than keep in touch with workers at Bagram Airfield. They

also maintain equipment that keeps Panjshir PRT's Internet connection and phones working. This enables the civil affairs workers of Panjshir PRT, who handle the financial and decision-making aspects

of their unit, to accomplish their mission, Nations said.

"How would civil affairs ... give information to contractors, governors and other people in order to know what to do next?" Joson asked.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Marine Staff Sgt. Matthew Morse guards the sight of a recent vehicle born improvised explosive device that destroyed a diesel tanker near Torkhem, Afghanistan. Morse is part of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class James Pinsky,
Naval Media Center

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.af.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Unit acts as lifeline for isolated troops

By Army Cpl. Tremeshia Ellis
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan

-- Delivering supplies to thousands of Soldiers stationed at forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan may seem like a job for giants.

But a very small team of Airmen and civilians is successfully completing this mission one day at a time.

The 330th Movement Control Battalion maintains a five-person team of Air Force logisticians to manage all Combined Joint Task Force -76 fixed-wing air transportation requirements.

"Controlling and influencing air movement requires a unique skill set specific to the Air Force," said Air Force Capt. Vanessa I. Marratt, a member of the 330th Movement Control Battalion's air cell.

The air cell has more than 70 years of combined experience in air transportation, said Air Force Maj. David J. Sanford.

"We are experts in air transportation, pipeline management, and reception, staging onward-movement and integration," Marratt said.

Unlike most air cells, these Air Force logistics organizations also schedule and manage flight operations for three short takeoff and landing aircraft.

Sanford said that makes his team unique.

"We, as logisticians, are actually managing, operating and sustaining three airplanes," he said. "Other air cells only focus on the tracking or coordination aspect of our mission. We actually have more of an operational role."

The V-STOL aircraft managed by the air cell travel to 12 regular routes weekly and are authorized to land at 27 locations around the Combined Joint Operations Area, Marratt said.

Their main customers are the forward operating bases. Some of the FOBs are really small and incapable of supporting larger aircraft or they don't generate enough cargo to warrant a C-130 Hercules mission, Sanford said. Still, it is critical that they receive the necessary



Black Water Aviation pilot Mark Meginnes hands a bag of mail to Army Spc. Eric LaFramboise. The Soldier is the noncommissioned officer in charge of airfield operations for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 10th Logistics Task Force in Mazar-e-Sharif.

supplies. That's when the V-STOL aircraft are put to use.

"Because our aircraft have a short takeoff and landing capability and because we don't have to carry 10,000 pounds worth of cargo ... we can get them the critical supplies they need," he said.

Sanford stressed the importance of the air cell's responsibilities.

Besides moving passengers rotating in and out of theater, the V-STOL aircraft move mail, ammunition and food on a daily basis.

Soldiers in some areas depend on the cell's planes to deliver their basic necessities, mission-essential supplies and morale boosters like packages from home, Sanford said.

Air Force C-130s support Coalition operations

By Air Force Maj. Eric S. Elliot
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan
 — The 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here has been supporting Operation Mountain Lion since the operation began April 12.

The squadron's C-130 Hercules aircraft helped deliver supplies such as food, water and ammunition necessary for Coalition combat operations.

"Our crews helped position personnel and equipment to forward locations before the operation began even as our mission planners worked with other joint planners to determine suitable drop zones," said Air Force Lt. Col. Thomas Lawrence, 774th EAS commander. "Once the operation began, we capitalized on the C-130's flexibility by delivering essential supplies to units via airdrop and traditional air-land missions."

Since the beginning of the operation, the squadron has flown thousands of pounds of supplies to Coalition ground forces. Many of these forces were operating in isolated parts of the country where it

would be difficult to bring in supplies by land.

The squadron flew two more missions Tuesday dropping 12 pallets of supplies to ground forces.

"The C-130 has the capability of resupplying troops in very remote areas, in all weather day or night," Lawrence said. "Our aircraft are equipped and our aircrews are trained to fly and deliver supplies where others can't."

Two of the drop zones used during the operation were on the side and crest of a steep mountain.

This created particular problems as planners had to determine the best flight path to help the aircrew hit the target while preventing the bundles from going over the edge of the mountain, the colonel said.

"We'd never used drop zones like these," Lawrence said. "This mission required a lot of preparation and planning. We knew that if we missed the drop zone, the supplies would fall down into the valley and be of no use to the ground troops."

Three aircraft flew these missions dropping a total of 34 pallets, each weighing

See DROP Page 13



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Redente, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Gary K. Lanham performs a joint airdrop inspection as he prepares to load pallets onto a 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130 Hercules. Lanham is the loadmaster superintendent for the squadron. His unit is deployed here to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan from Kulis Air National Guard Base, Alaska.

Engineer detachment Soldiers look ahead to 'great things'

By Army Staff Sgt. Nicholas Lutton
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan
 -- Soldiers from the 1224th Engineer Detachment transferred authority to the 961st Engineer Detachment at an April 10 ceremony.

Deployments aren't new to members of the 961st, who will draw on their previous experience in Iraq while digging culverts, grading roads, erecting towers and buildings and installing security barriers here.

"We appreciate the smooth handover from the 1224th to us and we look forward to achieving great things here," said Army Sgt. 1st



Phot by Army Spc. Samuel Hays

Army Sgt. Desmond Wilder hammers a floor into place while building housing for Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Salerno on April 12. Wilder is assigned to the 961st Engineer Detachment, deployed from Milwaukee.

See BUILD Page 13



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Redente, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

Pallets of prepared meals and bottled water are loaded onto an Air Force C-130 Hercules at Bagram Airfield on April 15.**DROP from Page 12**

about 1,000 pounds “on time and on target,” he said.

“The mission was a success because we were able to bring the ground forces the supplies they needed,” Lawrence said. “It was rewarding to be able to directly support our fellow warriors in harm’s way and also reconfirmed the unparalleled capabil-

ities of the C-130 and of our Airmen.”

Besides resupplying troops, the 774th EAS has also delivered more than 30,000 pounds of humanitarian assistance supplies to villages in the Korengal Valley, one of the poorest areas of the country, said Army Lt. Col. Michael Forsyth, of Task Force Spartan. Supplies included food, medicine, fuel, clothing and water.

“We want to build trust and confidence

among the people for the Coalition and its efforts, and we believe by establishing this trust the local populace will be willing to cooperate with Coalition forces in identifying insurgents, caches, enemy leaders and threatening activities,” Forsyth said. “A positive connection with the population is the key to denying the insurgents the ability to sustain themselves or to re-enter the area.”

BUILD from Page 12

Class Anthony Lukasik, the acting first sergeant of the 961st Engineer Detachment, based in Milwaukee.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Conway, the unit’s noncommissioned officer in charge of operations, predicted that the 961st will complete 30 projects a month.

The Guam-based 1224th Engineer Detachment, which had not been deployed before, completed its share of projects — including roads,

offices, living quarters and showers — while in Afghanistan. Army Capt. Ronnie B. Delfin, the detachment commander, said he was pleased with his troops and their work.

“Our job was to improve the quality of life for U.S. and Afghan troops,” Delfin said, noting that those troops were spread across more than 20 forward operating bases and border-control points.

“That kept us really busy,” he continued. “I am leaving here very satisfied.



Photo by Army Spc. Samuel Hays

From left, Army Sgts. Jack Rauschenbach and Scott Buck and Army Spc. Michelle Frank help build housing for Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Salerno on April 12.



An F-15E Strike Eagle soars over the mountains of Afghanistan in support of Operation Mountain Lion on April 12. The crew and fighter are deployed to the 336th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron in Southwest Asia from the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

Coalition launches 'Operation Mountain Lion'

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Coalition forces, in cooperation with the Afghan National Army, began "Operation Mountain Lion" April 12 to establish security, deter the re-emergence of terrorism, and enhance the sovereignty of Afghanistan, military officials reported today.

Afghan and coalition forces killed six insurgents while conducting offensive operations in the Marawara district of Afghanistan's Kunar province.

Military officials in Afghanistan said Operation Mountain Lion is part of the coalition's ongoing series of offensives that aim to disrupt insurgent activities, deny them sanctuary and prevent their ability to restock.

"This operation is helping the government of Afghanistan set the security conditions so democratic processes can take root," said Air Force Maj. Gen. Allen Peck, deputy air component commander for Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan. "Our job is to bring airpower to bear on the anti-Afghan forces and support the coalition troops on the ground."

Operations began with predawn air-and-ground assaults in the Pech River Valley, an area notorious for terrorist activity, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan officials said.

Soldiers from 3rd Brigade of the Afghan National Army's 203rd Corps are fighting alongside servicemembers from the coalition's Task Force Spartan, made up of soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division and 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Marines from Task Force Lava.

More than 2,500 Afghan National Army and coalition forces are involved in the operation.

"We're taking the fight to the terrorists in their own backyard," said Army Command Sgt. Maj. James Redmore of Task Force Spartan. "They gave their victims no sanctuary. They'll receive none from us."

Coalition leaders described the operation as a comprehensive effort to kill, incapacitate or capture terrorists operating in the region. It will continue as long as necessary, they said.

"Together, with our ANA brothers-in-arms, we're eliminating the enemy's

remaining sanctuaries in Kunar province," added Army Col. John Nicholson, Task Force Spartan's commander.

Air Force F-15 Eagles, A-10 Thunderbolt IIs and B-52 Stratofortresses are providing close-air support to troops on the ground engaged in rooting out insurgent sanctuaries and support networks. Royal Air Force GR-7 Harriers also are providing close-air support to coalition troops in contact with enemy forces. Air Force Global Hawk and MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicles are providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, while KC-135 and KC-10 refueling aircraft provided support.

"Our objective is to assist the coalition forces and Afghan national security forces in defeating the Taliban and al-Qaida," Peck said. "The coalition employs airpower every day to support Afghanistan's democratically elected government in establishing regional stability and long-term economic and political development."

Anti-terror efforts like this will extend the reach of the Afghan government, allowing legitimate governance to perform valuable work on behalf of the people in this region, Nicholson said.

Photos by Army Spc. Robert Honeycutt



Air Force Senior Airman David Collins performs "Georgia on My Mind," for which he received a standing ovation and second place at the Coalition Talent Show at Kandahar Airfield on April 16. He is assigned to the 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron based at Kadena Air Base, Japan.

(Left) Army Spc. Kris Holden performs a John Mayer song, which won him third place at the Coalition Talent Show here April 16. He is assigned to the 277th Aviation Battalion from Fort Drum, N.Y.

Community showcases talents in Kandahar



By Army Spc. Robert Honeycutt
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Members of the Kandahar Airfield community watched friends and colleagues showcase their talents during the Coalition Talent Show here April 15 and 16. The show featured more than 20 talent acts.

Army Staff Sgt. John Newland won the competition for his rendition of "You Make Me Feel Brand New," a song by The Stylistics. Newland is deployed with the 321st Civil Affairs unit from San Antonio.

Air Force Senior Airman David Collins of the 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan, took second place. Third place was awarded to Army Spc. Kris Holden of the 277th Aviation Battalion from Fort Drum, N.Y. Fourth place was awarded to the rap group DSC, consisting of contractors Jarvis Jefferson and Albert Ford.



The crowd applauds talent as judges make comments at the Coalition Talent Show at Kandahar Airfield on April 16.

(Left) Army Staff Sgt. John Newland sings "You Make Me Feel Brand New," by The Stylistics, which earned him first place.



Freedom Watch

May 1, 2006

“Reflective thinking turns experience into insight.”

-- John Maxwell